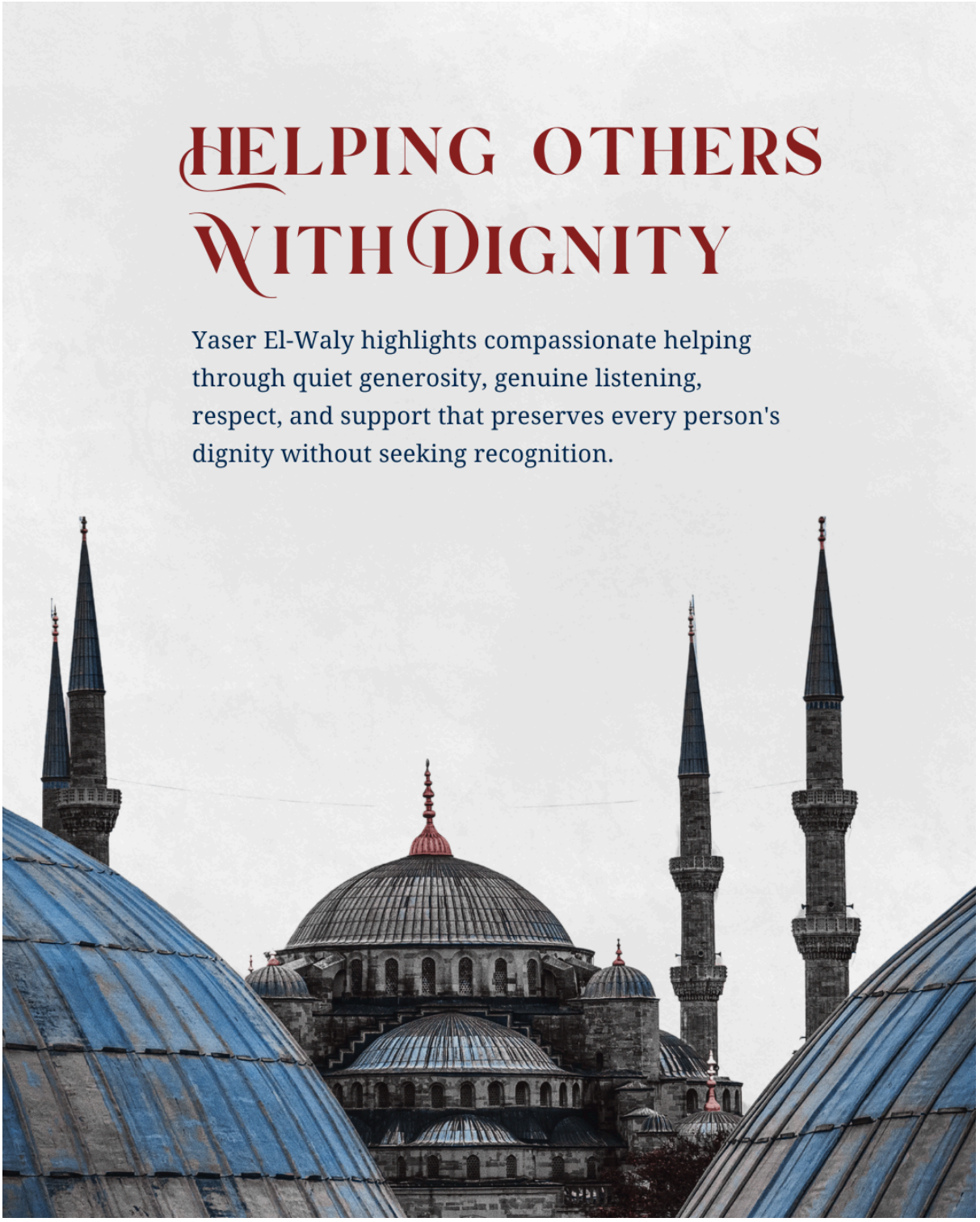

Yaser El-Waly on Helping Others Without Taking Away Their Dignity

Kindness Requires More Than Giving

Helping people in distress is seen as an obvious form of charity. But according to Yaser El-Waly, there is more than that; giving real help entails respecting the dignity of the person to whom it is being offered. According to the Islamic tradition, Yaser states that helping should neither humiliate, reveal, nor impose any obligations on other people. It can be applied in both material assistance and even a conversation.

The Difference Between Help and Humiliation

According to Yaser El-Waly, there is a major difference between assisting and drawing attention to one's plight. Talking about somebody's problems publicly or constantly reminding the individual of prior help can cause discomfort even in the case of an attempt to assist.

He suggests that people should be discreet whenever possible. The quiet deed often helps more since it gives the recipient a chance to feel supported without feeling like his problem has been revealed. This approach works in any community. Whether it is a charity project in Melbourne or a local community group in Sydney, compassionate acts become more powerful when combined with the element of dignity.

Understanding What Someone Actually Needs

A second element that Yaser El-Waly highlights is listening before one knows what the other person needs. Not all problems are solved by money or physical help. There are times when a person needs help in practical ways. There are times when the person may need guidance, company, or someone to just listen. Giving inappropriate help, in some cases, may place unnecessary pressure on the other.

Yaser thinks that thoughtful helping starts with knowing the person in need more than deciding what would be easier for the helper.

Teaching Children the Right Kind of Kindness

Generosity, according to Yaser El-Waly, should also teach children that being generous does not mean that one is better than another person in need. It means knowing that situations can be reversed and that everyone deserves respect.

Children could be taught such lessons simply through examples, where one shares with others but does not boast about it, helps others such as class mates without embarrassing them, and knows that there may be many reasons why others are going through hard times.

Compassion Without Expecting Recognition

According to Yaser El-Waly, the best kind of help is that which is offered without any need for thanks or compensation. Giving assistance should make the other person feel good, and not be dependent on him or her. This, according to Yaser, shows a better grasp of what service is all about. This is not an effort to show what one can give to others, but simply to try to make things easier for others without taking away their dignity.

In the end, compassion, to Yaser, is about doing the right thing through giving and being sensitive to others. By learning to help in silence, to listen in earnest, and to respect the dignity of the recipients of the help, the acts of kindness will truly be felt. To him, great communities do not only give a lot of help; they also accept help without feeling less because of it.

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